THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN CAPACITY BUILDING OF WOMEN GRAM PANCHAYAT MEMBERS

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1. Introduction:

Women, who form nearly 50% of the total population, need to improve their capabilities to participate in various development programmes to modify their wants and make decisions or pressurize over political decisions and policies. As the women constitute a very sizeable portion of the total population of India, their participation at grass root politics is very significant to improve the decentralized governance more successful. The struggle for participation of women in local self-governance had long lasting history. The role of men and women in the development process has received much attention in last few decades concerns with regard to women and their inclusion or exclusion in the development process have been increasingly examined.

Although the principle of equality of men and women was recognized as early as 1945 in the UN charter and in the UN declaration of human rights of 1948. Decentralization of administration plays pivotal role and it facilitates citizens to participate effectively in governance. In this regard during the year 1992, 73rd Amendment Bill was passed and it was given prominence to women‟s participation. Generally women also constitute 50% of the total population. But their importance in administration, political position has not been satisfying and very less importance has been given.

The process of decentralization has provided representation for women in local, village and block level governance but this representation does not pay way for their active participation. Women still face number of problems and challenges for their active participation in political field such as inadequate education, lack of financial independence, lack of training programmes, and so on.

Women‟s participation in politics is that, especially with governance is the necessary contemporary issue. Lot of discussion held regarding women‟s reservation in Panchayath Raj Institutions. To further empower and strength the system of Panchayat Raj, it is necessary to know how capacity building programmes and training is facilitating rural development particularly women empowerment.

The term development is no meaning without inclusion of all sections of society. Women contribute a lot to the whole society, but it is invisible. Panchayath Raj Institutions, now a day‟s equally (elected members) dominated by Women representation. Empowerment of Women

Gram Panchayat members is elemental to rural development. Every government has contributed to making the Panchayat Raj Institutions stronger, independent and self reliable. Furthermost importance is being given to education, health, nutrition, women empowerment, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, income generation and so on. In all these efforts the role of media intervention is primary. This study is an genuine effort to evaluate these mass media interventions in capacity building of women Gram Panchayat members of Karnataka State, which will further help the State and the Central governments to strengthen PRIs and formulate policies which are marginalized friendly, and mainly which focuses on utmost utilization of both human and economic resources available.

Media intervention is a necessary step to build confidence among women Gram Panchayat members and the evaluation of these media strategies is even more important to make sure the process of capacity building more vibrant. By observing and evaluating the communication channels- the role, impact and success rate of the communication strategies can be realized and specific knowledge can be catered to the members for better results. This is only possible when, the mass media, like Radio, Newspaper, Television and Internet messages are analyzed. With this background, it was felt that there is a need to look into the role of media in capacity building among gram panchayat members in Karnataka state.

2. Review of Literature:

i. Dr.Chandrashekhar and Dr.Ravindranath.N.Kadam (2012) in their study stated that women must get greater social and political exposure so that they can be dynamic in active politics. If they take active participation they can contribute a lot to the all-round development of their regions. They must be provided with better education facilities and offered necessary training at all levels. Efforts must be made to bring about a thorough transformation in their attitude and mindset. Only then the process of women empowerment through political representation becomes meaningful and realistic. This is not impossible but requires committed and dedicated efforts. All these observations should not lead us to a negative conclusion about the very policy of reservation to women. It has opened many opportunities to them in terms of participation and to fight

against negative impact of patriarchy. The article has shown that the process needs to be carried forward and not halted.

ii. Dube Kumar Dharmendra (2013) found that the women have a very poor awareness about politics. Also revealed that only 22.79 percent women listen to news through radio and Television every day, just 6.06 percent read newspaper every day. Besides these the socio economic setup, poverty, accessibility, proximity to the cities and plain areas and less importance given to the rural women by political parties and candidates are the other major factors for their poor awareness.

iii. Malagar Geetha (2007) reported that majority of the rural women listen and view radio and television for only entertainment purpose. This indicated television and radio are still only a media for entertainment. This calls for strengthening the educative and informative functions of electronic media.

iv. Ramesh Ashappa (2014) found that the 73rd Constitutional Amendment has given reservation to women to participate in administration of Panchayats at different levels. But, it is essential to know whether the women are aware about the aims, objectives, powers, functioning, administration, etc of Panchayat Raj Institutions. Hence, the present study was made surveying 300 women panchayat members in Gulbarga district. The study was concluded that it is essential to assign more powers to Panchayat Raj Institutions to generate revenue and its management for the rural development locally.

v. Gopa Ghosh and Ujjwal Kumar (2014) stated that the West Bengal government passed amendment to the panchayat law introducing one third reservations for women, including Schedule Cast/Schedule Tribe (SC/ST) women, at all three tiers of the panchayati raj system. The first election with such reservation was held in year 1993. The present paper is an attempt to look into the women‟s participation in Panchayati Raj Institution. The main objective is to study how women members are able to and to what extent occupy seats of Panchayat Raj Institution. It also examines the position of lower class women in

Panchayat Raj Institution. The study is based on results of various panchayati level elections in West Bengal and primary evidences collected from women pradhans and deputy pradhans in various gram panchayats. So the study revealed that women belong to lower class community have greater chance in decision making process.

vi. Kavya.C.N and Manjunatha S. (2015) in their study reported that today, in India the problem of rural poverty is increasing very rapidly. There are a very few ways to eradicate rural poverty in India. Through giving economic opportunities for the village people, particularly to the women in rural regions, has been proved very fruitful to reduce the poverty in rural India. Providing economic support and decision making power to women through these Gram Panchayats bring empowerment, further this strengthens the whole society in general. Hence, the present study is placed in this context to examine the role of Gram Panchayats in empowering women in Karnataka state and also to understand the social, educational, economical and political empowerment of women members of Gram Panchayats in Karnataka state.

vii. D Puthira Prathap and K.A.Ponnusamy (2006) in their research found that An experimental study of the relative effectiveness of four mass media channels (radio, television, newspaper, and Internet) on knowledge gain was conducted among 144 rural women belonging to self-help groups of three villages in Tamil Nadu, India. The selected technology, rabbit farming, was developed into parallel messages and was delivered through these channels to assess the knowledge gain. All the respondents (100%) had gained “adequate” knowledge after exposure to television, newspaper and Internet, while 97% of those exposed to radio had gained adequate knowledge after exposure. Traditional media were found to have a slight edge over new media in terms of influencing knowledge gain. Television was found to be the most effective treatment, followed by newspaper, Internet and radio.

viii. Narayana Billava and Nayanatara S Nayak (2016) in their research reported that Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) are viewed as solution to all the problems of rural development and is linked to empowerment of the marginalized section of society,

especially women. This paper presents a thematic review on the empowerment of women representatives in PRIs with reference to decentralisation process and the 73rd constitutional amendment in India covering the level of awareness among representatives about panchayat functioning, capacity to take self-decision, participation in community activities, changes in their socio-economic conditions, decision making power at panchayat level and their political participation. Women representatives are not comfortable to work at the panchayat level due to dominance of male representatives and they take a longer time to prove their capacity as compared to male representatives. Moreover, it was found that male representatives spend more time on political activities while, women spend more time in carrying out household chores. Overall, affirmative action through 73rd amendment has given women and the marginalised communities a sense of empowerment though they are yet to reach an equilibrium level.

3. Statement of the problem:

Through the history, Media is actively disseminating needful information and knowledge to the different strata of society and playing a crucial role in empowering the marginalized section of the society. Media being the catalyst of social change have a significant effect on individual, community, culture and society. Intentionally or unintentionally each person is influenced by the content of the media with respect to product, believes, socio-economic and political ideologies. In the era of globalization media has become a deciding factor of a person. Essence of life is knowledge. It is through knowledge, the development is possible. The knowledge pertaining to Panchayat Raj and the information needs of the Panchayat members to work successfully in implementing various development schemes and upliftment of the marginal section is disseminated through the various Mass Medias. To further empower and strength the system of Panchayat Raj, it is necessary to know how capacity building programmes and training is facilitating rural development. This study results will be path breaking in media intervention in capacity building among women gram panchayat members.

4. Objectives:

The main aim of the research entitled **"THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN CAPACITY BUILDING OF WOMEN GRAM PANCHAYAT MEMBERS"** is to cover up the following objectives:

1. To study the socio-personal characteristics of Women Gram Panchayat members.
2. To study the socio-economic and political profile of Women Gram Panchayat members.
3. To study the media habits among Women Gram Panchayat members.
4. To assess the level of political empowerment of Women Gram Panchayat members.
5. To find out knowledge gained by the Women Gram Panchayat members through media.
6. To evaluate the quality of Panchayat news in media.
7. To assess the utilization of mass media by the women gram panchayat members.

5. Research Methodology:

In this study, multi-stage sampling techniques will be used. First stage of sampling consisted of selection of districts, at the second stage Taluks (Blocks) will be selected and in the third stage, villages will be selected. Under this technique, one district will be selected from each revenue division. Two taluks (Blocks) from each district and sixteen gram panchayats from each taluka will be selected.

Finally 5 respondents will be selected from each gram panchayat. Total 4 districts, 8 taluks, 128 gram panchayats and 640 women gram panchayat members will be selected as the respondents for the proposed research work. A total of 640 respondents will be selected randomly for personal interview for data collection.

Tools of Data collection in order to fulfill the objective of the study, the following tools will be developed to gather primary data from various respondents with regard to elected female Gram Panchayat members. Questionnaires covered demographic background of the elected women Gram Panchayat members and problems faced by them. The primary data will be collected through questionnaires. The researcher also will gather data from secondary sources with

regard to problems of elected women Gram Panchayat members. The secondary data collected from annual reports, national and international journals, books newspapers, dissertations, articles and from the internet web pages.

6. Significance of the Study:

The present study also tries to find out the significant knowledge gained by the Women Gram Panchayat members through media and media habits among gram panchayat women. This would enable the media personnel to understand the beat of the women to improve their insight and play out the obligation of a part. The results of this research will likewise be of some utilization to the policy makers associated with the advancement of different projects for women in the gram panchayat administrations.

The results will also help to know about the present situation in gram panchayat administration. It helps the policy makers and local administration to frame required policies which will help women to make their mark in gram panchayat administration.

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